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ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT: Part one of this resource is a literature review of the academic publications on civil society in the Middle East and North Africa. Journals such as *Third World Quarterly, Theory and Society*, and *Palestine – Israel Journal of Politics, Economics and Culture*, among others, are cited and included.

Part Two includes donor agency documents and policy papers.

Any document without a PDF link can be obtained by the KSC.

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Summary

The academic literature on civil society in the Middle East and North Africa is somewhat lacking in comparison to documentation from other regions of the world due to the fact that societies in MENA have been much more repressive historically, resulting in fewer social movements, labor unions and organizations outside of the home to analyze. The media have existed but have been much more constrained depending of course on their respective political regimes.

As a result, academic research on civil society in MENA was not as prolific as analyses done in other regions, particularly Eastern Europe and Latin America. MENA studies did increase presumably as a result of the September 2001 Terrorist Attacks in the United States, as indicated by the number of peer-reviewed publications. The Arab Spring of 2010-2011 created even greater opportunities for regional experts to gauge social change due to the civil-society-driven regime openings in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen and subsequently other Arab societies.

Academic approaches of MENA civil society tend to have two major approaches: 1) a cross national analysis that may include two or more countries that typically uses the same variables and theoretical approach 2) a single case study of one country that may offer more detailed scrutiny than a study of several countries.

EARLY STUDIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MENA

Among the earliest of simultaneously-funded case studies of several societies, the two-volume Civil Society in the Middle East was based on a 1992 New York University project undertaken at a time when instability due the 1990-91 Gulf War coincided with noticeable political openings and social group mobilization in Jordan, Kuwait and Yemen.[1] The increase of civil society associations in MENA from the 1960s-1990s, especially political parties in Algeria, Yemen, Jordan and Morocco, and professional syndicates in Sudan, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, suggests that power bases formed that could challenge the authorities of the government.[2] Ibrahim suggests that Arab civil society revitalized itself in the 1070s-80s, and international factors plus new socio-economic formations (larger middle classes) will make it difficult for autocratic states to maintain the status quo.

[1] AR Norton, 1995. *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Vol 1. P.2. EJ Brill Publishers.
[2] Ibid. P 9.

TUNISIA

Bellin's analysis of Tunisia would foreshadow that state's collapse almost 20 years later. She explains that Tunisian citizens share an overarching sense of community (or political culture) that is homogeneous, a long history of civilian rule, and no strong military competing with or acting as the ruling party. Tunisia also broke with Arab Socialism and pushed a "quasi-liberal strategy of development" while the state declared it would actively promote civil society. The state would attempt to co-opt civic movements by mimicking them.[3] The author saw prospects for CS as mixed even with favorable social conditions of a large educated middle class, little ethnic fragmentation, a vast network of civic associations and an increasingly independent class of private sector entrepreneurs.[4]

EGYPT

Al-Sayyid's 1995 interpretation of Egyptian civil society notes a lessening in the Mubarak Government's repression of non-state associations, as well as "social transformations" in Kuwait, Lebanon and Morocco and elsewhere in the early 1990s. Professional associations and political parties more often publicly expressed viewpoints and Islamist organizations increased attacks on secular academics, tourists and those deemed apostate.[5]

Formal private organizations established an early civil society in Egypt in the early 19th century, mainly as a result of increasing trade in the world economy and more middle class merchants. In the 1940s, the Bar Association formed, and by 1991, there were 13,521 associations including 23 trade unions, 26 chambers of commerce, 23 professional associations and 13 political parties, along with numerous NGOs that provided social services.[6] Most of these bodies are not politically active and some generally government policies with the exception of dissident union protests.

Neo-traditional institutions are those organizations that push more socially sensitive and political activities and include mosque and church-based bodies that often compete, sometimes violently, with one another.[7] Political parties predated independence and 13 had legal authorization to function including the ruling National Democrats, the Neo-Wafd Party, the leftist Progressive Union Patriotic Rally Nasirites, all of which had significant electoral support. The Muslim Brotherhood and Communist Party did not

[3] Eva Bellin, 1995, "Civil Society in Tunisia," in *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Ed. AR Norton. P 141.
[4] Ibid. P. 147.
[5] Mustapha Kamil Al-Sayid, 1995, 'A Civil Society in Egypt,?" in *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Ed. AR Norton. P. 270.
[6] Ibid. P. 272.
[7] Ibid. P. 375.

have legal authorization to exist but had to seek alliances with other parties for platform representation.

Historically, Egyptian pharaohs and monarchs centralized power and constrained uncontrolled associational life. Modern leaders' limits on state power fluctuated throughout the years with 1981's use of emergency powers to 1987-1993 when Egyptian magistrates effectively challenged the executive to permit more party representation.[8]

Law 32 of 1964 and, importantly, Law 40 of 1977 regulated political activities and targeted specific behavior such as promoting atheism, and threatening state security.[9] The state can limit activities of professional associations, unions, political parties, especially when public meetings are sought, and by 1993, Islamic success in gaining control of the Bar Association resulted in a state effort to set quotas of organization memberships. The Guarantees of Democracy in Election of Professional Syndicates set a precedent for state intervention into internal private associational affairs but whether it will truly constrain Islamic gains remains to be seen.[10] The Egyptian authoritarian leadership confronted the presence of a large number of formal associations that catered to citizen demands but there is no evidence that the Mubarak Regime would completely deny citizens the right to partake in private associations.[11]

However if Islamic civil society becomes intolerant toward dissenting minorities and the state cannot provide the necessary goods and services needed to reduce citizens demands, the Mubarak leadership would have to compete with Islamic leaders to a claim of conformity to religious values, especially if it could not solve the economic difficulties of unemployment among the youth and poor. Such efforts to co-opt Islamic leaders might prove counterproductive however because it would vindicate efforts to create a religious society as existed in Iran and Sudan.[12]

JORDAN

Brand's analysis of Jordan emphasizes a new state-society relationship based on the 1989 National Charter that enshrined pluralism, tolerance and civility, and the long-standing existence of key CS institutions such as political parties (from 1989 on), professional organizations and labor unions.[13] The Islamic Action Front (IAF) is the most successful political organization and while acting as a social mobilizing force through charity and education, never seriously challenged the State in the way similar groups elsewhere in the Middle East do. The King's process of "managed liberalization" granted civil society groups space to act and react to citizen demands with the only serious threat being the IAF, a component of which has called for *sharia* law implementation.[14]

[8] Ibid. P. 280-282.
[9] Ibid. 282-283.
[10] Ibid. 286-287.
[11] Ibid. 290.
[12] Ibid. 290-293.
[13] Ibid. Laurie Brand. "In The Beginning Was the State", in *Civil Society in the Middle East*. P. 160.
[14] Ibid. P. 184-185.

SYRIA

Hinnebusch's essay on Syria follows a modernization theory trajectory in that change and economic specialization/commercial growth over time weakened old actors and strengthened new ones with "traditional CS actors such as agricultural associations" becoming catalysts for merchants, wealth, political pluralization and even a strong press in the 1950s. The rural-based *Ba'th* Party gained control of the State while co-opting other social actors like women's groups, youth and trade unions.[15] Yet in Aleppo, small manufacturers and artisans thrived outside state control, and often intersected with urban Islamist *ulama* that resented the Ba'th Government, and presented an alternative *suq* governance approach that itself attracted other CS allies until mosques and religious associations underwent purges in the 1980s.

However, private business became the most effective producers of economic growth and could open civil society more with greater outside trade, assuming the State will attempt full-scale market liberalization. The author predicts accurately "political liberalization would risk Islam becoming a vehicle of anti-regime mobilization as long as the ideological gap separating it from the secular minority regime is so wide." Middle class (*bourgeois*) business groups had state support for increasing economic growth and even political representation, but the other potent parts of civil society, especially Islamic elements, would represent the greatest threats to state stability if there was no democratic and inclusive approach implemented.[16]

PALESTINE

Palestine civil society evolved over three distinct periods: 1) 1917-1948 - a wide range of associations including clubs, labor unions, charities, etc. that all tended to perform social functions and be drawn into the Palestinian national movement; 2) 1948-1967 - the Israeli state broke the national movement while Arab governments constrained the power of local associations but narrow political interest groups such as women's/professional/student associations did survive, including *Fatah*, a political nationalist movement that had an underground army and bureaucracy; 3) 1967-1994 - The Jordanian State and the PLO provided organizational frameworks for four types of associations including political shops, voluntary cooperatives, voluntary mass organizations and Islamic groups. Political shops directly mobilize sectoral groups to input into political actions and support including trade unions originally leftist in

[15] Raymond Hinnebusch. 1995. . "State, Civil Society, and Political Change in Syria", in *Civil Society in the Middle East*. P. 220.
[16] Ibid. 234-235.

orientation (DFLP and PFLP). Fatah later controlled Worker's Youth Movement, and student unions.[17]

Palestinian civil society is greatly influenced by the initial lack of a legitimate state and later the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and the associations that exist, a network of *hamulas* or extended families, along with the village, neighborhood and religious solidarities.[18] Voluntary cooperatives focus on consumer goods and include cooperative institutions (food, dairy, chicken, agriculture), productive projects (food projects, dairy projects, consumer projects, and household cooperatives (food cooperatives, dairy cooperatives and agriculture).[19]

Voluntary mass organizations developed from student volunteers/social workers and include women's groups, charitable, health, family planning groups and those that assist the elderly, war veterans and handicapped.[20] Finally, Islamist groups are religious-political movements that compete with the more secular PLO/PA for support of citizens by offering rival political and social visions and include *Hamas*. Islamic goals and objectives tie into forming larger social entities (states) and issues of mobilization include co-education, western dress codes, and more use of Islamic culture and codes. The lack of civility and trust between *Fatah* and Hamas demonstrates how CS mobilization can be co-opted by larger entities that may employ violence that is self-serving rather than beneficial to citizenry as a whole.[21]

YEMEN

Carapico uses the interlude between North and South Yemen's integration and the war to conceptualize and measure civil society in that country. She sees Arab civil society as "primordial" or based on tribal social organizations rather than the Western pluralist associations that populate civil society. Yemen is Arab in that it is strongly Islamic, comprised by tribal and regional social loyalties and lacking any history of tolerance or political pluralism.[22] Yemeni unity from May 22 1990 until 1994 offers a laboratory for examining political change in a country that had had informal, folksy civic spheres.[23]

In 1988, a thirty month transition period initiated the new Republic of Yemen, a process controlled by a five-man presidential council, pre-existing parliaments and political parties like the Ba'ath and Federation of Popular Forces, and the *Islah* that represented the Hashid Tribal Confederation, the Muslim Brotherhood, anti-communist merchants and Saudi backed Islamists.[24] Yemeni tribes provided a strong sense of

[17] Muhammad Muslih, Palestinian Civil Society, in Civil Society in the Middle East. Ed. AR Norton. P 250-252.
[18] Ibid. P. 245.
[19] P 252-253.
[20] P 256-258.
[21] P 267-268.
[22] Carapico, Sheila. 1996, Yemen Between Civility and Civil War, in *Civil Society in the Middle East*. Ed. AR Norton. P. 287.
[23] Ibid. P 289.
[24] P 292.

identity that were regional or based on lineage, and were important social actors because they can unify, engage in political activism and resist state action.[25] These tribes began to hold conferences and publishing pamphlets in the 1980s, forming quasi CSOs.

At the same time, the Saudi-supported *Islah* took on roles that NGOs often perform: education, social welfare service and vocational training, usually in an effort to compete with the secular socialist National Democratic Front (NDF).[26] Welfare and regional associations like the Hadramawt Welfare Association also emerged in the early 1990s and served as an intermediary between tribal groups. Regional associations have several roles: to educate, train, alleviate poverty and act as a charity. Several larger competing groups began to pool resources in 1994, the Taiz Conference being an example. Taiz saw political parties, lobby groups, syndicates and professional associations all meet to form platforms and make demands on the government.[27]

Social organizations from most economic sectors would later proliferate, and human rights groups began operation in an effort to directly challenge the government's treatment of prisoners. The early 1990s also saw an explosion of media outlets (over 100 partisan newspapers and magazines) that could act as watchdogs to the government-owned papers. However by 1993, a press prosecution office began operation to regain control over the media.[28] Civil society existed briefly and even flourished in Yemen until social conflict escalated into full-scale civil war in 1994.

RECENT STUDIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN MENA

CROSS NATIONAL ANALYSES

Sarkissian builds on the notion of social capital in a rare cross-national study, and finds that those who join religious organizations in Muslim countries tend to be more civically engaged. He also adds that religious service attendance has little impact on engagement.[29] In fact, daily prayer has little to do with being more interested in the welfare of society. He concludes that majority Islamic countries differ from Western countries in that there is no relationship between trust, tolerance and civic engagement but religiosity does predict secular engagement better than other social-political characteristics.[30]

In reconciling Middle Eastern civil society and social capital theory, Valadbigi and Ghobadi remind that there is a contradiction between Western images of tolerance and freedom needed for civic networks, and of patriarchal Islamic societies, but the authors also add that the formal NGOs present in Middle Eastern countries can present space to contest authoritarian states. In other words, MENA social capital can exist but does so

[25] 294.
[26] 298.
[27] Carapico, Sheila. 1996. P. 304-305.
[28] Ibid. P. 310-312.
[29] Sarkissian, Ani. 2012. Religion and Civic Engagement in Muslim Countries. J*ournal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 51(4). P. 607.
[30] Ibid.

taking a different historical pathway.[31] Rather than mobilize via traditional neighborhood associations and activities, citizens can mobilize and connect through social media like Facebook as transpired in Egypt in 2011, a process that itself replicated Serbian protesters who mobilized against Milosevic in the late 1990s.[32]

Civic movements based on religious activism, even if violent, can be just as useful in toppling a dictator, violence the authors explain is a result of the traumatic experiences of colonialism and the years of repression under centralized, despotic and often corrupt governments.[33] The authors recommend that social capital can be modified and civil society better utilized if the following steps are taken:[34] 1) Removing patrimonial relationships between the state and society in the Persian Gulf to more quickly modernize and eventually democratize the region; 2) Organizing indigenous labor to better enhance civil societies in the region; 3) Empowering stronger CS groups to pressure ruling elites to further decompress political space; 4) Permitting activities of CS to complement the functions of the state and the other social actors to enhance social capital; and 5) Making political leaders collaborate with CS to better leverage cooperation within countries.

Altan-Olca and Icduygu assess what civil society means in Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey by examining surveys garnered from 2003-2006 by CIVICUS. They argue that the limits and boundaries between states and CSOs are often blurred, making precise measurement of power relationships, and the ability of one actor to influence another, more difficult.[35] Civil society has grown significantly in all three countries over several decades with 85,000 CSO functioning in Turkey, 14,000 in Egypt and perhaps 6000 in Lebanon.[36] However, a great many of these organizations in Turkey and Egypt have been heavily reliant on foreign assistance with the European Union a major contributor in the former and the EU and United States in the latter,[37] and donors may ultimately shape how and when CSO activities operate.[38] They add that other sources in society may also drive social and political transformation, making careful analysis even more critical.

In an important post Arab Spring analysis, Behr and Siitonen ask how Western donors should address the complex environment in countries where states have collapsed, or where civil societies mobilized to effectively challenge the status quo, and if they should engage less liberal elements.[39] They focus on Finland's donor strategy and programming that "seeks to promote civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights through its

[31] Valadbigi, Akbar and Shahab Ghobadi. 2011. Rethinking social capital and civil society: Reflections from the recent uprisings of the Middle East. *Middle East Studies Online Journal* 3. P. 132.
[32] Sheng, Andrew. 2011. Social capital and the Middle East. Think Asian.
[33] Hassan, Hamid A. 2010. Civil society and democratization of the Arab World', in Heidi Moksnes and Mia Melin (Eds,) Power to the people?(con-) Tested civil society in search of democracy. Sweden: Uppsala Center for Sustainable Development.
[34] Valadbigi, Akbar and Shahab Ghobadi. 2011. P 141.
[35] Altan-Olcay, Ozlem and Ahmet Icduygu. 2012. Mapping Civil Society in the Middle East: The Cases of Egypt, Lebanon and Turkey. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39. P. 158.
[36] Ibid. P. 165.
[37] P. 169.
[38] 178.
[39] Behr, Timo and Aaretti Siitonen. 2013. Building Bridges or Digging Trenches: Civil Society Engagement After the Arab Spring. P. 4.

development cooperation" that also emphasizes cross-cutting themes including the rights of women and children, gender and social equality; the rights of ethnic, linguistic and other marginalized groups; and the rights of persons with disabilities and HIV/AIDS.[40]

They conclude that donor must confront challenges in building Arab civil society by not widening conflict between sectors in countries (ex. secular versus Islamic) and using more dialogue and cooperation with Islamic donors and NGOs is vital.[41] Taking into consideration the need for a strong state to balance civil society mobilization is also critical especially if traditional society is powerful as in Libya, Yemen and Syria. An equally matched state-civil society tandem will contribute to the legitimacy of the new political order.[42] Donors should engage with the actors, organizations and social movements that perpetuated the Arab Spring even if these actors are not the typical institutions that have been funded in past. Using more flexible disbursement mechanisms like the European Endowment of Democracy would improve capacity building among these new actors.[43] Donor caution must be also be great in operating in the new Arab environments where outside political donors are viewed with greater suspicion, and taking into account national development strategies and buy-in, and how long programs can self-sustain.[44]

In a book chapter, Halaseh explains that CSOs in the Arab World are typically seen as "governmental-non-governmental registered organizations (G-NGOs) that authoritarian governments formed to undermine efforts by true civil society, and which often attempt to discredit NGOs, especially human rights groups.[45] Many of these groups provided service especially emergency assistance in conflict regions, poverty alleviation, economic development and help to vulnerable groups.[46] Yet constraints exist on the groups exist, including the lack of a national development vision, tight regulatory control and a lack of an enabling legal framework[47], being mostly donor-driven, and laws restricting the right to assemble, freedom of expression and access to information, and forming or entering into political parties.[48]

Regarding the Arab Spring, the author pinpoints the role of youth; now there are more college educated citizens who lack employment opportunities, becoming catalysts in Tunisia and Egypt, and activating trade unionists, Islamists and other political parties, and other citizens dissatisfied with autocratic governance.[49] Youth movements, in fact, evolved into three types of organized entities to ensure the sustainable outcome of their

[40] Ibid. P. 23.
[41] P 25.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Halaseh, Rama . 2012. Civil Society, Youth and the Arab Spring. P 259.
[46] Ibid. P. 260.
[47] Halaseh, P. 260.
[48] Ziad, Abdel Samad and Mohamadieh, Kinda, 2011: "The Revolutions of the Arab Region, Socioeconomic Questions at the Heart of Successful Ways Forward", in: *Perspectives – Political Analysis and Commentary from the Middle East*, Special issue 2 (May): 112-118: 112.
[49] Halaseh, P. 265.

revolt: newly-founded political parties; non-governmental civil society organizations, and unstructured youth groups working together, reporting and informing the public on developments and violations.[50] These youth groups have tremendous opportunities ahead and must they learn the political processes, and learn to manage and build consensus. CSOs can lead the youth by example by practicing democratic principles internally and institutionalizing equality, inclusion and transparency.[51]

Cavatorta emphasizes that recent political changes in the Middle East did not follow the same transition model as in Eastern Europe, where established civil society CSO actors challenged authoritarian regimes and were able to generally inculcate democracy afterwards. The Arab Spring was unique in that youth drove much of the momentum, even when many saw them as "apolitical" or driven by consumerism.[52] Being non-traditional and non-ideological political activists, the youth movement more effectively moved to capture public support, avoiding older efforts of political parties or partisan civil society groups to carry sustainable and effective anti-regime coalitions.[53] Youth leaders also diffused their movements, using online and social media tools to communicate and avoiding quick state crackdowns and blockages of the free flow of information that always assisted the regimes in the past.[54] Finally, the revival of trade unionism complimented the declining living standards, worsening pay conditions and managers' corruption, to add fuel to the youth movement.[55]

Kandil presents what he calls a critical review of Civil Society literature in the Middle East and asks whether "Western concepts and theories that were developed according to a specific economic (capitalist, liberal), political (democratic) and socio-cultural context (the civic culture), have succeeded to deal with the Arab reality" and does so examining research from 1990-2010, the era he states is the first truly multi-disciplinary look at the topic.[56] He adds that civil society does not reflect a homogeneous concept nor should it be examined from a judgmental perspective because "it is a human phenomenon impacted (and impacting) by a socio-cultural, economic and political context shaping the indicators affecting effectiveness".[57]

The methodology of CS measurement, either quantitative or qualitative or both, becomes important to get a better idea of regional changes, and how the global environment affects the Arab Region.[58] Academic projects such as 1989 Johns Hopkins University effort, recurring CIVICUS regional surveys and the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR) conference reflect an ongoing effort to study civil society more rigorously.[59] Interdisciplinary studies of Arab CS before 1990 were rare and often employed different concepts and terminology with the exception of focuses on interest

[50] Rowsell, Nicole, Iinterview on 19 May 2011.
[51] Halaseh, P. 271.
[52] Ibid. P. 78.
[53] Ibid.
[54] P. 79-80.
[55] P. 80.
[56] Kandil, Amani. 2011. A Critical Review of the Literature About the Arab Civil Society. P. 4.
[57] Ibid. P. 5.
[58] P. 11.
[59] P. 15-16.

groups such as business groups (registered according to the law regulating NGOs), professional groups, trade unions and some other voluntary organizations specific interests but the relationships between voluntary organizations and the State, or the potential political and economic roles is not included.[60]

The 1990s saw a rise in critical studies of CS by local Arab experts that were exploratory in nature (by individual country or sub-region) and usually highlighted respective historical roots as well as the legal environment.[61] In the late 90s, Arab CS literature advanced as a result of the convening of the Second Conference of Arab NGOs in 1997, at a time "when Arab NGOs had become more mature and better liberated from the state's hegemony and its traditional discourse" and when the issues of globalization and the policies of exclusion and marginalization as well as the failure of the State to deal with the issue of social justice all emerged.[62]

The period of the third millennium vastly improved the study of Arab CS in that several methodologies came forth and complemented each other simultaneously, permitting better analysis, and providing the tools to compare countries, types of organizations, and so on, using fieldwork based on questionnaires, personal interviews, focus group discussions, comparative analysis, statistical processing and analysis of data with the help of new programs and comprehensive multi-disciplinary research approaches based on various fields of various social sciences.[63]

Kandil summarizes:

> "Civil Society Organizations are thus part of a social culture and environment as well as a political environment mainly hegemonic (for a few cases restrictively democratic). Therefore, it is necessary to look at these organizations in a realistic way (that might represent a trauma for some). It is also important to consider that they do not represent a uniform body inside each country as they are featured by several differences and contradictions; this applies also at the level of individual activists. We are living in societies lacking to a big extent the spirit of 'institutionalization'; therefore, individual differences are creating the gaps".[64]

Kandil concludes by opining that civil society cannot be considered as a magic wand that guarantee political openings in Arab countries so it is important to look at the capacities of each movement(s)in a realistic manner, the available possibilities, and the interaction with the State and the society as a whole.[65]

Volpi addresses the well-known Islam-antithetical- to-democracy perspective in his dissection of "civility" within Islamic countries.[66] He compares Western concepts of civil society and the role that state has had in the use of violence, and explains that

[60] 20.
[61] 22.
[62] 24.
[63] 27.
[64] 33.
[65] 40.
[66] Volpi, Frederic. 2011. Framing Civility in the Middle East: alternative perspectives on the state and civil society. *Third World Quarterly* 32(5). P. 827.

communities vary on their degree of internal civility.[67] For him, civility is not comprehended based on specific models of governance but rather with "intersubjective understandings and communicability of practices," liberal-democratic communities function with civil society but Middle Eastern ones prioritize a civility, or the use discrete conflict resolutions over a substantive critique of social interactions.[68] In other words, civility is normative; the liberal state defines civility in a different way than does the Islamic state.[69]

Murphy sees what she calls "civility" as being absent in Jordan, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates as the states there built and regulate their "communicative spaces," and at the same time, control civil freedom, social equality and tolerance.[70] These Arab regimes aspire to improve economic activities and growth via information and communications technology (ICT), and with private sector actors, limit the utilization of digital tools for political discussions and redefining civility. The state is encouraging uncivil behavior with its oppressive regulations and surveillance that is "subverting the creation of a shared public consensus that might challenge its own hegemony.[71]

The Arab Spring is an expression that citizens seek a unified civility or public discussion and will do so using ICT, breaking social taboos, criticizing the regime, while bringing new and in new and diverse perspectives.[72] However, this "opening civility" remains vulnerable to authoritarian elites in this early transition stage, and there remains the difficulties of managing democratic politics and any new-found tolerance and pluralism.[73]

Anderson distinguishes the Arab revolts of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya between not by looking at political aspirations of participants or the use of technology but by the local contexts, or which persons actually revolted in each country.[74] Tunisian protests started in rural areas and moved into the cities, engaging, importantly, labor unions members to join. In Egypt, educated youths in the city united to rebel while Libyan tribal bands served to combat the state. Tunisians were more spontaneous and less organized in demonstrating while Egyptians were much more strategic.[75] She concludes by noting the shared ideas and tactics of youth in all three cases but adds the regimes all differ as do other local actors.

In an oft-cited article, Challand predicts the emergence of a new counterpower of civil society in the Middle East based on a new political imaginary that replaces the old autocrats, an imaginary based on a new political subjectivity that "mixes an individual

[67] Ibid. P. 828.
[68] P. 840.
[69] 828-829.
[70] Murphy, Emma C. 2011. The Arab State and (Absent) Civility in New Communicative Spaces. *Third World Quarterly* 32(5). P. 959.
[71] Ibid. P. 960.
[72] 977-978
[73] Ibid.
[74] Anderson, Lisa. 2011. Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences Between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya.
[75] Ibid.

sense of citizens' involvement with that of a re-defined and reinforced collective identification around a secular notion of the nation".[76] The author proclaims this is a new movement and not based on a neo-liberal, individual-based initiative or an Islamist collective capture of civil society. The general causes of the ME unrest are straightforward: the rising costs of food and the authoritarian reliance on U.S. defense assistance, that specifically has a negative impact on local civil societies.[77]

Challand defines civil society as a source for collective autonomy, or when a social group can pick both the institutions to govern itself and the cognitive ways which this group represents itself.[78] Conventional associations like Egyptian unions and even a weakened Muslim Brotherhood partook but did not lead the revolts. Here, civil society mobilization is beyond mere group membership or economic status but rather is a more diffused movement within societies, driven by spontaneity among the young disillusioned by political ideologies.[79] Middle Eastern civil society is now about broad secular "political participation, national equality, and isonomy, a new notion of citizenship" [80] that supersedes earlier more confining identities, even religious ones.

Kane takes a slightly different approach when addressing the role that civil society has in negotiating weapons regimes/treaties within Middle Eastern countries. International NGOs have worked with local NGOs since the 1990s even after the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group (ACRS), the only standard regional arms control negotiation mechanism stalled. The author explains that over 30 civil society projects have launched since 1995, creating a forum for approximately 750 regional and extra-regional military officers and experts on arms control and security.[81] Current projects include the Near East and South Asia Center of Strategic Studies, the Center of Middle East Development and Search for Common Ground.[82] Kane adds any CSO-driven initiatives may be limited in scope because they are not normal treaties. The Arab Spring's instability may break linkages to important decision-makers but at the same time provide opportunities for CSOs to fill any vacuums and work with new state leadership.[83]

Salime's description of the Middle East Policy Initiative (MEPI) provides a summary of a long-running American foreign assistance program in the region that began in late 2002 under the Bush Administration in an effort to train women and youth business skills. MEPI consists of four pillars: 1) economic, 2) political 3) educational, and 4) women's empowerment, and the political pillar is a tool to "seek to develop institutions and processes deemed crucial to active citizenries".[84] The author justifies MEPI's goal of diminishing the role of politics by using non-state actors but critiques any downplaying

[76] Challand, Benoit. 2011. The Counter- Power of Civil Society and the Emergence of a New Political Imaginary in the Arab World. *Constellations* 18(3). P. 271.
[77] Ibid. P. 274.
[78] P. 275.
[79] P. 278.
[80] P. 280.
[81] Kane, Chen. 2011. The role of civil society in promoting a WMDFZ in the Middle East. P. 51-53.
[82] Ibid. P. 54-55.
[83] P 60.
[84] Salime, Zakia. 2010. Securing the Market, Pacifying Civil Society, Empowering Women: The Middle East Partnership Initiative. *Sociological Forum* 25(4). P. 729.

of both the importance Islamic activism and its role in binding social solidarity and principles of business practices and capital transactions.[85] One of MEPI's overriding strategies is targeting women as agents of change and reformers in societies[86], especially women acting in a classical liberal function (in the marketplace). However, the strongest criticism of MEPI levelled is whether democracy can be enhanced by business-driven citizens, women or otherwise, if they support an oppressive neoliberal state combined with a global corporate system.[87]

Labor unions, historically one of the most potent organizational sectors in Western societies, vary in terms of size and ability to mobilize across the Middle East. Cammett focuses on 13 countries and categorizes by regime types (oil monarchies, low-income republics and low-income monarchies) and how dependent stares are on oil. Labor viability can be de jure and de facto, and can be influenced by domestic actors, such as pro-reform political elites and export-oriented entrepreneurs, and external non-indigenous factors (international financial institutions and superpower influences).[88]

The author explains that oil monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and UAE have the fewest worker protections while other states such as Morocco and Jordan have protections that exceed those in some European countries. In all countries, workers have stronger de facto rights, suggesting de jure rights are not always protected. Workers have greater employment options (flexibility) in non-oil Morocco where French trade unions were a great influence.[89]

Over the past ten years, labor standards increased especially in wealthy oil monarchies where trade negotiations with the US and state-increases in local workforces changed regime labor strategies. In lower income Arab societies, workers experienced more job dismissals because of union activities especially if single union confederations do not provide protections.[90] The author adds that international agreements alone will not enhance systems to the standard of the International Labor Organization and only domestic political will can. Whether authoritarian leaders will increase labor freedoms to correspond with a broader democratization movement remains to be seen.

Cheema points out that civil society was more often used in the context of the post-Cold War era in the Middle East and reiterates the Orientalist perspective of scholars such as Daniel Pipes, and Samuel Huntington who claim the collective umma makes civil associational life problematic with others like Augustus Richard Norton and Muhammad Muslih who claim otherwise.[91] The author adds that autonomous associations have indeed existed in the Middle East since the Ottoman Empire even if they were later

[85] Ibid. P. 737.
[86] P. 742.
[87] 743.
[88] Cammett, Mark. 2010. Labor Standards and Labor Market Flexibility in the Middle East: Free Trade and Freer Unions? *Studies in Comparative International Development* 45.
[89] Ibid.
[90] P 252.
[91] Cheema, Sujata Ashwarya. 2009. Development of Civil Society and Democratization of the Middle East. *Lex et Scientia* 16(2). P. 450.

severely weakened by authoritarian leaders, but gained new strength in the late 1980s with regional economic hardship.

Public space would be "carved" by a civil society activism and wide range of associations with their own bureaucratic structure and preoccupation to formulate policy alternatives. Cheema concludes that intermediate powers and independent social groups thrive in the Middle East and provide essential services to citizens because the state is not available to do so. Yet CSOs typically rely on patronage from the ruling elites, a contrast to Western groups, because MENA groups fill the void left by the state's pulling out in many social issues, making voluntary Islamist associations increasingly relevant and forming the strongest opposition against the
state, and also critical for any movement to democratization.[92]

Cheema then compares several countries in the Middle East. Lebanon's weaker state and market economy creates the pluralism and space for civil society, with a National Constitution that guarantees freedom to congregate and associate. Many of these groups bind by kinship, confessional identity and other broader links, especially the six major religious sects that all have comparable professional associations, environmental and advocacy groups, trade unions, and women's organizations.[93] In Jordan, development assistance promoted a facade of democratization, followed by decreasing financial assistance and eventually state services, culminating in social groups who had to provide welfare services to citizens. The 1990s era of economic liberalization in fact promoted a reestablishment of banned groups like political parties, and by 2009, around 2000 CSOs across sectors exist and many flourish.[94]

Bernard discusses the founding of the United States and the lessons learned that might be applied to Islamic societies. He argues that because there are so many variations of Islam (interpretations of the *Shari'a*), the political leadership should not adapt one religion but rather separate the state from the mosque and encourage religious freedom in civil society. In other words, one sect or faith cannot be chosen as a favorite.[95] The state should not control religious groups because misuse by political elites will likely follow. Religion can act as a check on politicians instead of the reverse of having leaders use religion against private citizens. Islam, like Christianity, holds the foundation for liberty in practicing faith. Finally, moderates should emphasize that political freedom is the best way to maintain religiosity in Muslim societies if that freedom permits tolerance of all viewpoints.[96] Moderates will be most likely to implement mosque-state separation and must be seen as being helpful and not be seen as countering Koranic principles.[97]

Cavatorta and Elananza examine political opposition as a civil society unit of analysis in Algeria and Jordan in an effort to explain what they see is a lack of democratization.

[92] Ibid. P. 455.
[93] Cheema, Sujata Ashwarya. 2009. Development of Civil Society and Democratization of the Middle East. *Lex et Scientia* 16(2). P. 452.
[94] Ibid. P. 453.
[95] Benard, Alexander. 2008. The Advantage to Islam Of Mosque-State Separation. *Policy Review* 147. P. 72.
[96] Ibid. P. 73.
[97] Ibid.

They first admit as other that political parties have been ineffectual in promoting change and Islamist movements are in much better position to lead reform because of their numerous social activities, their critical provision of services to citizens, relative autonomy from ruling elites and their structured ties with a number of Islamic charities.[98] In Algeria, the long struggle between civil war factions left an issue the government is cautious to address in the fate of thousands missing and presumed dead, with secular and Islamist associations divided on how to proceed with liberalizing governance. The government has opted to play each faction against the other in delaying meaningful changes.[99]

In Jordan, the authors see secular groups as fragmented and unstable, and driven by short term financial gains, even while cautious of permitting Islamist factions to gain too much traction while having to cooperate with them. Algeria and Jordan are similar in that their two major respective civil society regimes opponents are conflictual but must often cooperate to mutually benefit. Jordanian liberals and democrats and the Muslim Brotherhood criticize each other for attempting to be opportunistic in dealing with the King but the secular elements suffer more from legitimacy because of reliance on Western assistance as well as drawing a smaller portion of support from society at large.[100] A paradox exists in that democrats have to back the monarchy to a degree to prevent Islamists from seizing complete power via the vote, creating a three way jostling for political control of the Jordanian polity.[101]

Rishmawi's 2007 typology of organizations in the Arab World translates civil society as "society of the city" suggesting a rural to urban migration of groups. Early twentieth century organizations emerged to promote social reform and using the Islamic principles of *zakat* (a form of obligatory alms giving) and *sadaqa* (voluntary charity) and some welfare groups associated with mosques have existed for centuries.[102] Mutual benefit groups have specialized functions and can be regional or national in scope, including professional associations, labor unions and cooperatives. On the other hand, public-benefit organizations function like charities in having leadership who do not benefit directly from fundraising and are accountable to a governance structure.[103]

Civil society organizations vary according to sectors that can include: leisure and sport clubs, social assistance and delivery (development NGOs and welfare groups), knowledge and research, societal/community representation (labor unions, youth, business) and public interest (human rights, women's rights, civil education and public policy advocacy). CSO success over the years has depended on the amount of donor support, training and education, and internal organizational capabilities. The author

[98] Cavatorta, Francesco and Elananza, Azzam. 2008. Political Opposition in Civil Society: An Analysis of the Interactions of Secular and Religious Associations in Algeria and Jordan. *Government & Opposition* 43(4). P. 5.
[99] Ibid. P. 11.
[100] P. 14.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Rishmawi, Mervat. 2007. Overview of Civil Society in the Arab World. P. 11.
[103] Ibid. P. 12.

emphasizes that constraints and challenges to CSOs, including government regulation and supervision, must be met if overall civil society in the Middle East is to progress.[104]

Langohr argues that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have filled the vacuum that political parties normally maintain in advocating citizen rights and countering the authority of the state, in comparing Egypt, Palestine and Tunisia. The long history of Egyptian voluntary organizations, often supported by foreign assistance was not enough to overcome restrictive laws and tight regime supervision implemented by the Mubarak Government including Law 32 and 153.[105] However internal organization disagreement and lack of sufficient funding mainly hindered human rights CSOs from pushing fundamental democratic reform; foreign funding was often rejected to avoid losing legitimacy in the eyes of the public.[106] The Palestine Authority's Fatah serves more as a co-opting state body than an independent political party competing with other constituency-based institutions. On the other hand, Morocco and Algerian political parties consistently win legislative seats in parliament while Egyptian political candidates rarely have party ties and run as independents, preventing long-term party formation across the electorate.[107] Stable, solvent party systems must evolve in Egypt, Palestine and Tunisia for true democratization to transpire and the over-reliance on better finance but "less political" NGOs must lessen.

Yom reiterates two main questions made about civil society in the Middle East: what is it in the Arab context? What is the role of the authoritarian state in co-opting CSOs? Despite a decade of foreign assistance from 1991-2001 ($150 million from USAID alone) on civil society strengthening, scholars point out that liberalization of political regimes has been the exception and democratic backsliding the norm[108] Policymakers should be cautious in applying the civil society thesis in the Middle East because the political-economic framework and status quo is too solidly entrenched to nearly create a democratization pathway. Social actors in the Middle East are not as clearly defined seeking identical civil society goals as occurred historically in other geographic regions. The template of political reform is not clearly defined in Egypt, Yemen and elsewhere.[109]

El-Sayed Said examines an unconventional level of analysis (anti-war movements within expats or global Arab civil society) while testing macro-level theories such as Huntington's "clash of civilizations". He predicts the number and diversity of Muslims abroad will promote a civic activism that will overcome the sense of alienation felt among Arabs, some of whom utilize terrorism and violence to protest perceived international injustices.[110] American military intervention in Iraq, Israeli activities in Palestine and other non-Arab cultural influences in the region contributed to an anti-global or Western) unity binding intellectuals as well as populations.[111]

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[104] 34.
[105] Langohr, Vickie. Too Much Civil Society, Too Little Politics. *Comparative Politics* 36(2). P 193-194
[106] Ibid. P. 199.
[107] P. 189-190.
[108] Yom, Sean L. 2005. Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World. P. 17.
[109] Ibid. P. 27.
[110] El-Sayed Said, Mohamed. 2004. Global Civil Society: An Arab Perspective. P. 60.
[111] Ibid. P. 64.

The author sees global civil society as a catalyst for local actors to push reform and democratization within authoritarian countries, especially human rights based NGOs that seem to be the most prepared to mobilize and articulate.[112] He cites Arab advocacy NGO success in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Yemen, Syria, and Algeria as key to change because they have "advocacy organizations that have much stronger connections with global civil society than their counterparts in traditional fields of philanthropy, religion, and development" and these groups "share with global civil society the desire to make democracy and the rule of law more meaningful to ordinary people.".[113] Empowerment in the context of democratization is the key philosophy of many of these organizations.

In a prescient 2003 article, Berman employs the revolutions political change literature in predicting upheaval in the Arab world, and explaining that Islamic groups such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood offered the best solution to counter authoritarian states' inability to deliver needed services. Islamic groups have the organizational skills, expertise, financial resources and access to mosques, the media, political parties and even professional associations, to create a "deep sense of community and collective identity" and support from citizens of all socioeconomic levels.[114]

Berman astutely pinpoints Muslim associational activity as weakening the Egyptian Government after economic downturns, military defeats and foreign intervention created a loss of legitimacy for leaders, fomenting an Islamic society or cultural revolution, a process also occurring in Algeria with the 1992 rise of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).[115] The Egyptian state began to cede leadership authority and influence on many issues including implementing aspects of sharia law, maintaining gender roles and consumption habits. Civil society manifested as Islamic associational life that would lessen (and inevitably bring down) regimes in the Middle East. But Berman deems this civil society as an illiberal revolutionary movement she compares to the Weimar German groups that were exclusionary and not greatly tolerant of non-members.[116]

Gubser sees non-governmental organizations as critical components of civil society because they emerge from differing social classes and bring together people to render services, solve community problems, observe traditional customs and provide assistance, contributing at the grass-roots level and often, being economically critical as a safety net and politically as a democratic agent.[117] NGOs in Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria all vary in their roles and impact with Egyptian and Syrian organizations being more constrained, and Jordanian and Lebanese ones more recently active and influential on political liberalization.[118]

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[112] 67-68.
[113] 69-70.
[114] Berman, Sheri. 2003. Islamism, Revolution, and Civil Society. *Perspectives in Politics* 1(2). P. 258.
[115] Ibid P. 263.
[116] 266.
[117] Gubser, Peter. 2002. The Impact of NGOs on State and Non-State Relations in the Middle East. *Middle East Policy* 9(1):139. P. 140.
[118] Ibid. P. 142.

Some NGOs, like Jordanian professional syndicates, can act as gatekeepers on state foreign policy as in relations with Israel demonstrate, while international NGOs act as tools of local citizens and foreign governments alike, such as human-rights and environmental organizations, and charity bodies serving as development agents for wealthy Arab states.[119] The author emphasizes the flow of ideas and communication between societies via NGOs as an ongoing trend in affecting local conditions and thinking.[120]

Wiktorowicz sets limits on the power of civic organization, and therefore civil society, in the Middle East in his comparative analysis. Regimes in the region liberalized to different degrees using social control mechanisms to prevent a rapid decline in political order, mechanisms that included civil society organizations that would be "embedded in a web of bureaucratic practices and legal codes which allows those in power to monitor and regulate collective activities".[121]

The author's example of Hashemite state co-optation of civil society in Jordan demonstrates a less repressive form of regulating citizen activities, a co-optation that is not complete but rather swings back and forth as journalists' associations, women's groups , and cultural societies vie for more autonomy vis-a-vis the regime. Other states, of course, are less permissive of growing associational independence but the regional trend applies nevertheless. Overt force is less common and autocrats now rely more on modern technologies of surveillance to watch, count, measure and regulate citizens in a form of enhanced state power.[122] NGOs and other formal associations can be efficiently channeled and managed and the people they represent governed.[123]

Abootalebi, in the same vein, argues that Middle Eastern civil society emergence is predicated upon the distribution of socio-economic and political resources, and the state remains the primary actor in its shift to a regulated quasi-pluralistic model.[124] Civil society actors such as organized labor and professional groups are in a position to limit state power. However, it is Islamic organizations that are "the best-organized opposition forces, and are often willing to form alliances or cooperate with political parties, professional syndicates, and voluntary associations to achieve shared political and socioeconomic reforms".

Abootalebi continues that Islam is compatible with modernization process and democracy, especially in countries such as Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan, and optimistically adds that Islam in no more innately anti-democratic than Christianity or Judaism, *if pragmatic contenders vie for political power of the state*.[125] He concludes that in countries where states are weaker and societies stronger, (i.e. those with formalized Islamic associations or labor unions) democracy is more likely to evolve.

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[119] P. 45-46.
[120] 148.
[121] Wiktorowicz, Quintan. 2000. Civil Society as Social Control. *Comparative Politics* 33(1). P. 43.
[122] Ibid. P. 48.
[123] 55.
[124] Abootalebi, A. 1998. Civil Society, Democracy and the Middle East. *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 2(3).
[125] Ibid.

Ismael and Ismael trace Arab civil society historically, citing an Islamic middle class that promoted private business and trade associations in the 8th and 9th centuries.[126] These associations acted outside the purview of the state because Islamic law permitted them to do so. After the era of European colonization and new political 20th century independence, elites governed the Middle East imposed a "quasi-Europeanized culture on the people" and in doing so, attempted to neutralize social movements utilizing co-optation, intimidation or elimination. Arab dictators could unify societies against a common Israeli foe and engage in massive development projects while repressing citizens and civil organizations alike, and without acknowledging the existence of human rights violations.

The authors point out the irony of the Arab States' lack of expertise and lack of experience in actually building successful economic development and welfare transformation processes, even while in some cases exhausting millions of dollars in petroleum revenues. State military failures in the late 1960s-1970s led to an opening of "free space" and emergence of voluntary organizations, almost 70,000 in the Arab World by 1995, and these groups promoted welfare and human rights, and could escape state cooptation generally. International civil society groups assisted local ones, promoting social mobilization and not surprisingly, business groups, historically potent, appeared to pressure for liberalization of domestic economies and participation in international markets.

Bellin discusses the term civil society versus terms such as civility, *civisme* and citizenship and declares the Middle East is not lacking the potential for associational growth any more than other societies controlled by authoritarian leaderships.[127] She cites the example of Tunisia where educated, ethnically homogeneous, economically-aspiring citizens appear to favor secular dictatorship over any clerical, theocracy (at least in 1993 they did). Bellin correctly points out that the then trends of decreasing economic stability and oil price decline and loss of state legitimacy should mobilize growing middle classes and educated youths.[128]

Khalid Masud argues that early tenth century Middle East civil society revolved around economic diversification and strong middle class merchants and professionals who founded guilds to promote their interests.[129] Waqf or the concept of trust property created private space away from state control. Shari'a law also protected individuals via Divine Will, a form of rule of law that set limits on the government. Civil society is ingrained in Islam but does not directly confer power to associations but rather a citizen's and society's as a whole, relationship with God.

[126] Ismael, Tareq Y. and Ismael, Jacqueline S. 1997. Civil Society in the Arab World: Historical traces, Contemporary Vestiges. *Arab Studies Quarterly* 19(1):77.
[127] Bellin, Eva. 1994. Civil Society: Effective Tool of Analysis for Middle East Politics? *PS: Political Science and Politics* 27(3). P. 510.
[128] Ibid.
[129] Khalid Masud, Muhammad. 1993. Civil Society in Islam. Paper for Seminar on "Islam and Modernity," Karachi , November 4-6.

CASE STUDIES

Among more recent studies of Middle Eastern civil society, Pierce's examination of foreign-policy decision-making among Egyptian political actors including the Army, Christian Copts, the Muslim Brotherhood, and secular and moderate Islamic groups, employs two data points. The author attempts to contrast the status of civil society before and after the Arab Spring.[130] Importantly, he points out the role of the Obama Administration's role (or lack thereof) in encouraging the Brotherhood Government to promote more openness and democratization. The complexity of international relations and domestic politics is revealed in this case study, as well the differences within Egyptian society.

Sema looks at perhaps the most secular of Middle Eastern countries, Turkey, and in doing so, uses the female headscarf as a gauge of the strength of both civil society and the state.[131] Organizations deemed secular and non-secular have differing stances on the use of scarves that remain a symbol of Islam and traditional ways of life. However, not all religious groups may necessarily advocate the use of scarves just as some Kemalist groups would, suggesting some sophistication and unpredictability exists among political associations.

Abdalla continues the longtime study of one of the most vibrant civil society actors in the Middle East, that of Egyptian labor, and the need to re-evaluate the role of employee unions vis-a-vis the state. She recommends that the government attempt to better engage labor to help reduce economic instability and in doing so permit workers to have greater inputs into social policies and collective bargaining.[132]

Gerges's contrast of post Arab Spring Islamic parties discerns differences in goals and objectives in platforms. A new "civil Islam" would facilitate more pluralization among citizens rather than forcing them to accept an authoritarian Islamic state that encroaches too far into civil society.[133] Egyptian lawmakers should aspire to centrist policies evident in Tunisia and Turkey. On the other hand, political parties are becoming more pragmatic in that they are delivering tangible goods to constituents, that is, becoming more modern and pragmatic, making future foreign policy and relations with Israel more less conflictual.

Eltaweel provides a helpful description of the historical evolution of civil society in the Middle East while refuting the popular notion that it does not exist but, rather, is different. He breaks this timeline down into: 1) the early twentieth century; 2) the

[130] Pierce, Anne. 2014. US 'Partnership' with the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and its Effect on Civil Society and Human Rights. *Society* 51(1):68-86.
[131] Akboga, Sema. 2014. Turkish civil society divided by the headscarf ban. *Democratization* 21(4):610-633.
[132] Abdalla, Nadine. 2014. Egyptian Labor and the State.
[133] Gerges, Fawaz. 2013.The Islamist Moment: From Islamic State to Civil Islam? *Political Science Quarterly* 128(3):389-426.

European colonial era; 3) the Post-Colonial and early Arab independence era; and 4) the era of authoritarian regimes and quasi democracies.[134]

Civil society is then classified into two types. The first type includes Islamic groups that endeavor to bind society via charity by filling the void left by the state's absence. These groups, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, are more important today because they provide the most support against the ruling elite. The Brotherhood represents more than a typical special interest organization in that the author calls it a "social movement that has not facilitated a confrontational revolution but instead attempted a long-term transformation of the political structure.[135] In Lebanon, the six major religious sects all offer varying levels of material support to citizens.

A second type of CS is not affiliated with religious ideals or objectives and are typically supported by the host government international donors. An example includes the April 6 Movement. A final type of CSO includes professional associations and environmental, advocacy, trade unions, and women's groups, along with the media.[136]

In the case of Kuwait, Al-Zuabi explains that civil society organizations will have to contribute in assisting the state and private businesses in advancing the modernization process.[137] CSOs can help most by promoting human welfare and safety, education, environmental protection and sustainability, and safeguarding more vulnerable parts of society such as women and the disabled.[138] CSOs also need to contribute more at the local and regional levels but here, a lack of resources and a legal framework often hinders their activities. Labor unions and charity organizations are finding greater challenges in getting young people to join the worker movement.[139]

Salem makes the case of Palestinian exceptionalism when he compares CSO activities in Gaza, where Hamas-backed groups did well but Palestinian Authority (PA)-backed groups suffered, and vice versa, in the West Bank.[140] NGOs in Palestine fall under several types including: those that monitoring human rights and elections, those that raise public awareness of democracy and governance concepts, those that provide agricultural and health information, and CSO that lobby internationally and organize nonviolent activities to protest the occupation.[141]

Earlier organizations used a relief provision approach while subsequent groups preferred resistance and grass-roots state-building, and finally, building transparent, accountable institutions. NGOs now need to form clear, political positions while taking

[134] Eltaweel, Hend. 2012. Civil Society in the Arab World: Case Study of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. P 4.
[135] Ibid. P. 7.
[136] Ibid. P. 5-6.
[137] Al-Zuabi, Ali Z. 2012. Civil Society in Kuwait: Challenges and Solutions. *African & Asian Studies* 11(3). P. 345.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Al-Zuabi, Ali Z. 2012.
[140] Salem, Walid. 2012. Civil Society in Palestine: Approaches, Historical Context and the Role of the NGOs. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 18(2-3). P. 20.
[141] Ibid. P. 21.

into consideration the political rivalry between Hamas and Fatah, and how to deal with the Occupation to be effective. Some NGOS, now more than ever, require stronger ties to local communities and some need to build enough sustainability to evolve into political parties with rules that encourage compromise and the skills necessary to govern.[142]

Nidal points out that in the 1980s, the PLO served as an umbrella for CSO services across Palestine to provide health care, athletic leagues, agricultural and economic development, and to serve as a link or a barometer to consumers. CSOs would train leaders who would eventually obtain representation on boards of trustees and administrative boards.[143] In the 1990s, CSOs in Palestine increased to nearly 5000 as a result of the peace process, and CSO scopes of work did as well. CSOs, importantly, also provided work to hone political dialogues with the Territory as well as between the State and Israel.[144]

Weisman follows up and views civil society in Palestine, utilizing a Waltzian third-image (or international perspective) in that associations there have more recently become more beholden to foreign aid donor wishes more than local citizens demands.[145] During the first intifada in the 1980s, Palestinian CSOs were much more unified and responsive to local demands. But they have become more disaggregated and acrimonious with one another in the last ten years. Ironically, it is non-indigenous, international donors that now have to compensate indigenous associations to assist a weaker Palestinian State that is itself by other by larger, more powerful outside states.[146] At the same time, these same CSOs have taken on many roles that the state normally carries out including increasing economic activity.[147]

The importance of new media in the United Arab Emirates demonstrated by a popular English-speaking blog suggests that civil society can be a forum where non-citizens can find voice. Blogs serve as a medium for political and social discourse and shrinks the distance between persons in a country not known for traditional organized political discourse. The author declares that bloggers can criticize the state without challenging the local culture and nation[148]. Outsiders (foreign nationals) can find a sense of belonging via electronic communication while at the same, nationals can further their own statehood as long as it's an Arabic forum and not in the foreign blog in English. In other words, mutually exclusive cultural values can co-exist but don't always have the same message or target audience.

At the same time, Kamis portrays Egypt's media as eclectic and paradoxical in that a historical evolution has produced a heterogeneous sector with opposite and contrasting

[142] P 22.
[143] Fuqaha, Nidal. 2012. Palestinian Civil Society Organizations and the Palestinian National Authority. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 18 (2-3). P. 32.
[144] Ibid. P. 31.
[145] Weisman, Steven. 2012. Civil Society in Palestine: Determining the Effects of the Intersection of the Local and the Global. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 18(2-3). P. 131.
[146] Ibid.
[147] P 129.
[148] Vora, Neha. 2012. Free speech and civil discourse: producing expats, locals, and migrants in the UAE English-language blogosphere. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 18(4). P. 787.

characteristics: authoritarian and liberal, publicly owned and privately owned, private and state-owned, and not the typical homogenous, Western democratic result of always supporting liberal institutions and private spheres.[149] The Egyptian case, therefore, is unique and explaining the Arab Spring must be done with both a culturally sensitive approach, while noting that the gap between "the increasing margin of press freedom and the slim margin of political freedom and democratic practice is starting to narrow because of a spillover from the realm of virtual activism into real activism, and vice versa".[150]

D'Aspremont takes an in-depth, historical view of civil society in Lebanon, a country known for being much more social pluralistic than typical Middle Eastern countries. Under the Ottoman Empire, associations blossomed in the mid -19th century as a result of economic growth and intellectual pursuits, with family and community-based charitable groups being at the forefront. In the 20th century, Lebanese associations became vehicles for local infrastructure development and even trans-community in orientation, examples including *Mouvement Social,* and notably Palestinian-related NGOs.[151]

The author emphasizes the impact that the civil war (1975-1990) had in changing priorities of local associations, and the emergence of new trans-community groups and international NGOs, in assisting with conflict and post-conflict response. By 1988, national coordination became possible with the Lebanese NGO Network, an umbrella that gathered diverse associations like the LSM, the *Makassed, Amel Association, Caritas, Terre des homes, and Le Secours Populaire Libanais.*[152]

After the war, CSOs fell under several classifications: 1) religious charities that educate and provide help to orphans and the needy 2) Confessional organizations that provide social assistance 3) Local Specialized service NGOs 4) National-level service NGOs and International NGOs, many of which took human-rights and political rights perspectives, and a collective citizenship and national interest. Today, 37% of CSOs receive funding from international donors, 33% from private donors and 15% via membership fees, and most of the local organizations lack professional staff and hierarchical efficiency, even while acting as catalysts for democratization and unifiers of the larger, integrated civil society even while promoting separate Christian, Druze and Muslim identities.[153]

Montagu's study of the voluntary sector in Saudi Arabia notes an "integrative exchange" exchange exists between the *Al Sa'ud* Family, the bureaucracy and civil society, unlike in most other Middle Eastern countries. She emphasizes that CS is vibrant in its own form, blurred yet defined-- within groups of informal structures and

[149] Khamis, Sahar. 2011. The Transformative Egyptian Media Landscape: Changes, Challenges and Comparative Perspectives. *International Journal of Communication* 5. P. 1172.
[150] Ibid. P. 1173.
[151] D'Aspremont, Geoffroy. 2011. The Development of Civil Society in Lebanon from the Ottoman Empire to the XXist Century: A Driver of Political Changes?
[152] Ibid.
[153] Ibid.

relationships where social debate on Islam is widespread.[154] The author's view is that voluntary sector organizations are "permitted structures that support traditional moral values that, in fact, set an example for both the Saudi family and the formal state, acting as an arbiter or supporter.[155] The four types of organizations include: 1) Associations such as the National Dialogue or the National Association of Human Rights, both set up by academic institutions;[156] 2) New specialized service-providing charities focused on mental and physical disabilities like the *Abdullatif Jameel* Foundation;[157] 3) Traditional charities like Al-Birr, that started out as traditional charities and sometimes collaborate with the government; 4) Non -Governmental Organizations such as gender rights groups that might even observe municipal elections, or advise the *Shura*.[158]

Dimitrovova compares the position of civil society vis-a-vis the Moroccan State and traces greater diversification, modernization and internationalist overtures to Europe and the West since the 1990s, particularly within the context of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP).[159] CSOs have contributed to a political transformation but in a passive manner, with the King regulating them in the public sphere,[160] making civil society "less tolerant" as a whole and relationships with international donors often patronizing.[161] Approximately 30 Women's rights CSOs, generally middle class in origin, have made strides in improving the family code (*Moudawana*) but have clashed with Islamic groups demanding a more traditional approach in reform, resulting in the King acting as a moderator.[162] Private human rights CSOs have been less effective in their goals and the state co-opts much of this social movement through the use of ministry of solidarity funding, or initiatives like the Royal Advisory Council of Human Rights and the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER) which has been a regional model for investigating human rights abuses.[163]

A notable non-state NGO is the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH), founded by the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, that aspires to improve economic development by lessening Western political hegemony in the region. Morocco's persistent poverty facilitates the state's tolerance for more Islamic charity organizations that receive little government or Western aid, or with the popular Justice and Benevolent Association (AWI) that challenges the state with an anti-capitalist, leftist approach in reducing social inequalities.[164] The state supports CSOs like AMSED that seek to improve education, healthcare and poverty reduction, especially in rural areas. The author concludes by reiterating Europe's reliance more on a top-down, one size fits all

[154] Montagu, Caroline. 2010. Civil Society and the Voluntary Sector in Saudi Arabia. *Middle East Journal* 64(1):67-83. P. 68-69.
[155] Ibid. P. 73.
[156] 78.
[157] 79.
[158] 81.
[159] Dimitrovova, Bohdana. 2010. Re-shaping Civil Society in Morocco: Boundary Setting, Integration and Consolidation. *Journal of European Integration* 32(5). P. 3.
[160] Ibid. P. 4.
[161] P 5.
[162] 6-7.
[163] 7-8.
[164] 11.

collaboration with the state alienates a large party civil society even while becoming more active across Morocco. Simultaneously, the state itself continues to effectively keep independent voluntary associations in check, keeping their cooperation fragmented, more service oriented, and less political, and without a critical mass or clear leadership.[165]

Cavatorta continues in a similar vein as he looks at the *Jamiat al-Adl wal-Ihsan*, the largest Islamic association in Morocco with between 50,000-600,000 members, and espousing the philosophy that Muslim faith will solve the problems of the country if all believe in it.[166] The author contradicts several common assumptions about civil society in the Middle East: civil society is usually bad; Islamic movements are uncivil and inimical to democracy, and intolerant of other groups; and Middle East countries all share the same Islamic social contexts;. He counters by deeming civil society as neither all good or bad but neutral,[167] and driven by unique factors in each country.[168]

Jamiat is an example of a very popular private organization that is not completely democratic and has a strong central leadership that has sometimes promoted views antithetical to human rights. However, Jamiat has shown to be adaptable in responding to what citizens demand including supporting women's rights (in a Muslim context), condemning state persecution and violence against rival organizations (such as leftist associations), decrying the use of political violence in social change[169], and declaring procedural democracy as the proper path to pluralization.[170]

He adds that Islamic movements, the most important social movements in the Middle East, provide a broader service in polarizing all of civil society, mobilizing other competing secular groups in a constructive way. Inevitably, all groups might unite to break a dictator's hold on governance.[171] In Morocco, secular groups have a long colonial tradition and enough citizens backing to survive and would claim a legitimate piece of citizen "space." In other words, all of society would benefit from competition between Islamic and secular private associations especially because political parties have little ability to negotiate democracy because of state co-optation or discrediting.

Hassan explains that Arab civil society reflects the socio-economic structure of the region with the variations of societies resulting in differences in what he calls civic institutions. Social movements such as leftist, liberal and 'secular leaning" organizations do in fact pressure that state but other movements hinder democracy including those based on religion and ethnicity.[172] Groups like trade unions and agricultural associations are politically marginalized and don't have the same mobilizing impact. Historically,

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[165] 14.
[166] Cavatorta, Francesco. 2006. Civil society, Islamism and Democratisation: The Case of Morocco. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 44(2). P. 213.
[167] Ibid. P. 208.
[168] P. 205.
[169] 214.
[170] 219.
[171] 205.
[172] Hassan, Hamid A. 2010. Civil society and democratization of the Arab World', in Heidi Moksnes and Mia Melin (Eds,) Power to the People?(Con-)Tested Civil Society in Search of Democracy. Sweden: Uppsala Center for Sustainable Development. P 70.

colonialism severely weakened traditional civil society in favor of despotic states and nationalized religious bodies that actually weakened the mediating role of jurists and creating "court priests" who are state employees who can rarely act independently.[173]

The author adds that in Egypt, social movements are heterogeneous and pluralist (professional syndicates, journalists, engineers, physicians and the Bar Association), and corporatist (trade unions and agricultural associations). Political development did not entail systematic repression as in Iraq but it never experienced the mobilization needed for a pluralist/economic takeoff.[174] Social movements can disrupt important industries and influence the state enough to modify public policy but extremist Islamisation only politicizes religion creating fanaticism and sectarianism.[175]

Faris dissects the April 6th social media phenomena in Egypt and claims the failure to maintain that social movement was overstated. In fact, Facebook, Twitter and other tools can still contribute to broad-based democratic change. The 2008 strike mobilized textile workers and shut down parts of Cairo, garnering national and international attention. Youth leaders of the April 6th Movement would later be persecuted and imprisoned, creating a lack of direction and internal organization splits making the one year anniversary strike much less effective.[176] The author predicts (correctly) that young political dissenters will play critical roles in forcing political change in future years. To be more effective, the author recommends youth leaders leverage labor's attempts to acquire more worker rights via big business.[177] April 6th should join forces in the efforts of the independent media, professional associations and the labor unions as they vie for greater freedoms in the court systems rather than on the street where the 2008 protest was more likely a first run for future success even if it was not the case in 2009.

Kausch differentiates between Egyptian associations in 2000 and estimates there were between 17,000-30,000; most active ones being dedicated to economic development and/or religious in function, (115 trade/industry groups, 24 professional syndicates, 22 labor unions and 24 legally-registered political parties).[178] In 2008, the majority of associations (25,000) were apolitical, but the few that focused on human rights were highly visible even if they faced more state obstacles to activities.[179]

Political party and labor union activity codification includes the Associations Law, the Political Parties Law, the Press Law, the Penal Code, and the Emergency Law, that specifically contains clauses on Egypt's international legal commitments like the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights (both ratified by Egypt in 1982); and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ratified in 1984), as well as the extremely

[173] Ibid. P. 71.
[174] P. 72.
[175] 74.
[176] Faris, David. 2009. The end of the beginning: The failure of April 6th and the future of electronic activism in Egypt. *Arab Media and Society* 9.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Kausch, Kristina. 2009. Defenders in Retreat Freedom of Association and Civil Society in Egypt. P. 3.
[179] Ibid.

restrictive (even in the Middle East) Associations Law (Law 84 of 2002).[180] NGO regulation revolves around registration practices, internal governance, activities, funding, fiscal regime taxation and dissolution.[181] Party activity constraints occur during registration by the Political Party Committee (PPC), particularly Law 177 that forces parties from reforming or breaking away,[182] while the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Office of State Security Investigations (SSI) manipulates NGO existence.[183] Kausch concludes by noting a general trend of decreasing open repression during the 1990s to more selective types of civil society containment in the latter decade, still "inhibits the emergence of regular, productive consultation mechanisms that lead to tangible results and reform, along with any systematic dialogue between NGOs and the government".[184]

Civil Society for Tétreault is expressed in women's rights in a 1993 post-Desert Storm analysis in Kuwait. Voluntary associations have never had the autonomy here as in most countries as the state regulates professional associations, clubs, labor unions, preventing any direct political activity, and banning political parties entirely.[185] Despite the apparent cooptation of NGOs, civil society learned how to be effective in vocalizing public position defending the private sphere against government intrusion, and the royal family itself defended domestic life and women's rights in particular. The emir challenged the National Assembly in 1980 and 1992 to permit women the right to elect officials, resulting in a public discourse on civil rights and the "almost unremarked inclusion of women at independently sponsored public debates".[186]

Civil society in Palestine becomes different things for different observers in a discussion of NGOs historically. Peled presents a straightforward argument that anything outside the state including market actors provide valuable contributions.[187] Palestinian CSO actors had to fulfill state roles until the 1980s and even had to observe elections because the government did not have the capacity to do so.[188] In Israeli, CSOs served more of a check on the government, represented some who advocated expansion into the West Bank, and funded some organizations in Palestine up until the Intifada when conflict shifted strength to defending greater Israel for Jewish NGOs rather than protecting Palestinian victims.[189] If there is greater planning and cooperation within civil society across borders outside the venues of government policies, overall peace becomes more likely.[190]

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[180] Ibid.
[181] P. 6.
[182] 7-8
[183] 11-12.
[184] 16.

[185] *Tétreault, Mary Ann . 1993. Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights. Middle East Journal 47(2). P. 9.*

[186] Ibid. P. 289-291.
[187] Peled,. Civil Society. 2005. *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 12(1):64-85.
[188] Ibid. P. 77.
[189] P 78.
[190] P 84 Statement by Terry Boulatta.

In Iraq, despite Kurdistan's relative vibrancy and political success well after most American military forces left the country, civil society's ability to generate local legitimacy and feelings for "statehood" were never certain. Shekhany clarifies how difficult it was in in the mid-1990s in building non-state actors in a region beset with a culture of militarism, Ba'athist repression, traditional limits on free speech and A lack of modern associational networks independent of the government or state is illustrated by the history of NGOs in Kurdistan.[191] Turkish incursions forces civilian displacement, making economic and social recovery problematic and foreign aid funds wildly distorted NGOs that had little capacity or experience in infrastructure development or basic food distribution. Civil society organizations actually drew scorn from Kurdish citizens and international donors alike with self-interested behavior.[192] Civil society eventually became partner in rehabilitating Kurdistan but only after political parties reconciled themselves via conflict resolution and the use of independent media

Sullivan's case study on NGOs in Palestine traces the historical evolution of groups that started in the 1920s-30s and were welfare oriented, providing up to 60 percent of primary health care, 50 percent of hospital care and 100 percent of disability care to families.[193] Foreign donors, including European governments, the United Nations and international organizations such as Oxfam provided monies, much of which to directly to the Palestinian Authority (PA), and NGOs varied in degree of professionalism and competence.[194] The General Union of Charitable Associations in Palestine was the coordination agent of Palestinian and Arab donors that numbered 385 in 1996 and support various social groups that included women's rights organizations, labor unions and business groups. The Palestinian Authority itself was split into by those more patriarchal and top-down and who lived outside (the returnees) and those who have lived in the Territory and continue to fight for independence.[195]

Kraidy traces the long history of mass media in Lebanon, from their pre-war origins in 1937 to the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC), sponsored by the Lebanese Forces Christian militia, that survived the civil war in the 1970s, to the 1990s struggles of resisting broadcasting regulations that prohibited privately owned radio and television stations from broadcasting news and political programs.[196] In 1994, the ban on private media fell in parliament but then PM Hariri seemingly vied to control the media industry via legal methods. Audio-Visual Law regulations "prohibited any television station from operating at a financial deficit for a protracted period," giving the government significant regulatory control and vastly shrinking the number of working television and radio stations.

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[191] Sheikhany, Azad Hama. 2000. Is Building Civil Society the Answer to Lasting Peace in Iraqi Kurdistan? *Convergence* 33(1-2):102.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Sullivan, Denis J. 1996. NGOs in Palestine: Agents of Development and Foundation of civil society. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25(3):93. P. 94.
[194] Ibid. P. 95.
[195] 99.
[196] See Kraidy, Marwan M. 1998. Broadcasting Regulation and Civil Society in Postwar Lebanon. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 42(3):387.

Kraidy also conceptualizes civil society in Lebanon's context by emphasizing its ability to rebuild after conflicts, its private, non-state status in taking over critical sectors such as public services like information broadcasting, and complementary, simultaneous strong tradition of Lebanese private enterprise and powerful banking industry, that could more than substitute for a weak national government. Yet the state had to reclaim some regulatory control over media to prevent political anarchy and social dysfunction, but this control must not become "repressive government intervention" that affects other sectors like labor unions and journalistic freedom. Freedom and order must be balanced with unity and diversity if Lebanon is to maintain its status as a democratic and pluralist beacon in the Middle East.

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Zubaida argues that Egyptian civil society suffers from a lack of social autonomy and initiative, what he calls the spheres of civil society.[200] The authoritarian state must "withdraw" and a framework of rights and obligations must emerge for this to improve. He sees voluntary associations as being capable of instilling citizens' autonomy and political rights, and only labor unions, professional syndicates, political parties and the like can do so but they confront state cooptation efforts (ex. Law 32 of 1964) and bureaucratic management of citizens.

The author sees economic activity, driven by personal and non-state relationships, as part of civil society, and past any lack of market growth is a result of state interference and "administrative discretion" or bureaucratic interference.[201] Some voluntary organizations have thrived like Islamic groups that can obtain special favors and privileges from the bureaucracy, while labor unions and professional syndicates provide hope of some room for institutional autonomy, provided that the restrictive Islamic civil society does not bind more secular, liberal initiatives (human rights, women's rights), as demonstrated in 1990s book banning efforts. Conservative, Islamic "illiberal" civil

[197] Sullivan, Denis J. 1996. NGOs in Palestine: Agents of Development and Foundation of Civil Society. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 25(3):93. P. 94.
[198] Ibid. P. 95.
[199] 99.
[200] Zubaida, Sami. 1992. Islam, the State and Democracy: Contrasting Conceptions of Society in Egypt. *Middle East Report* 179. P. 2.
[201] Ibid. P. 5-6.

society does not encourage autonomous popular organization or action but treat the masses as objects of religious reform and control.[202]

In conclusion, academic studies of the Middle East and North Africa generally argue that despite popular perceptions to the otherwise, civil society has historically functioned, and still does even today. Early CS forms revolved around entrepreneurs and Middle Class merchants with their guilds while more modern manifestations emphasized Islamic associations, labor unions and human rights groups. MENA civil society, like civil society in Eastern Europe and Latin America, evolved over time, and continues to reflect growing state strength and diversification in the economy, and in the political system.

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[202] P 10.

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